DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 145 418 CS 203 529

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TITLE Motivating Students to Write: Community Study.
PUB DATE Mar 77
NOTE 18p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Conference on English Education (15th, Knoxville, Tennessee, March 24-26, 1977)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Community Study; *Composition (Literary); *English Instruction; Family Environment; *Local History; Secondary Education; Senior Citizens; *Student Motivation; *Teaching Techniques
IDENTIFIERS Foxfire

ABSTRACT

This paper describes two activities used in a course that implemented the "Foxfire" approach for studying the local community of Rock Hill, South Carolina. The first activity, a unit on the family, encouraged discussion of students' families, presented poems exploring the details of family experience, and provided the opportunity for students to compose character sketches and poems. The second activity, based on students' interviews of old people at the local senior citizens' center, resulted in written compositions about the experience. Examples of students' poems and their written interviews with senior citizens are included. (KS)

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Motivating Students to Write: Community Study

The activities described in this paper grew out of a nine-week course that I recently taught at a local secondary school. This course was an experimental one in English originally entitled "Creative Research: The Portrait of a Multiethnic Community--Rock Hill, S.C." It is part of the "York County Multiethnic Cultural Heritage Project" funded by an ethnic heritage grant from the Office of Education. The project's primary goal is to develop short, self-contained instructional modules based on the local cultural heritage for use in area school and other instructional settings. The project is focusing on the cultural contributions of three ethnic groups: (1) The Southern Appalachian, (2) The Afro-American, and (3) The Native American.

The secondary course was designed to use the "Foxfire" approach in studying the local community. According to the syllabus, the students would begin by exploring their own personal heritage and then extend their research efforts by examining the community in which they lived--its customs and traditions, its landmarks and other places of interest, and, if time permitted, its community leaders of the past and present. There were no prequisites, no grade level stipulations beyond junior or senior high school, and no recommended level of achievement. However, the class size would be limited to 25.

I am not going through the entire course, and I certainly do not intend to describe the false starts and unexpected set-backs that we all encounter in most of our courses. I do want

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to describe two of the class activities that seemed to appeal most to the students. The first is the unit on the family and the second, and most successful, was a visit to the local senior citizens' center.

The unit on the family began with a discussion of the topics: "What is a Family" and "What is a Family For?" After the general class discussion, each student had a short assignment to complete using the classroom as a work-center. There were a variety of assignments including make a picture album of your family, draw your family tree as far back as you can, compare your family to several of those portrayed on television, imagine that you are either your pet (or even your house) and describe the family as seen through these new eyes. There were fifteen different assignments from which the students could select. Each student's response was individual and reflected his own family situation and his own ethnicity.

One of the most popular short assignments involved reading several poems describing family members or family events. Since each student had been working on an interview with an older relative while the unit on the family was being studied, the short assignment called for the writing of a character sketch of that particular relative. The student was urged to include details from the interview in writing the sketch. The poems used to stimulate this assignment were (1) "Genealogy," by Sharon Hucklenbroich, describing her Polish father, (2) Nikki-Rosa" by Nikki Giovanni, describing her childhood remembrances of being black, (3) "Those

Winter Sundays" by Robert Hayden, describing his hard-working and unappreciated black foster-father, and (4) "My Old Maid Aunt" by Dodi Schultz, (5) "Looking in the Album" by Vern Rutsala, and (6) "Family Reunion" by Jim Wayne Miller--all poems describing family members and family happenings, but with few obvious ethnic characteristics included. The students were urged to notice how these authors used details in describing the person or occasion depicted in each poem and to make similar use of details recorded in their interviews.

The following poems written to fulfill this short assignment show the degree to which the students were able to use details in their poems.

Poem 1--"My Grandfather" by Derrick Coley makes use of repetition as he describes his grandfather. The details included in his longer prose sketch that accompanied the interview are not spelled out in the poem. However, this tenth-grade boy does reveal the admiration he has for his grandfather, along with a few specifics, as he uses contrasts to describe his grandfather. Derrick declined any revision of his poem--It said what he wanted it to.

MY GRANDFATHER

MY grandfather is not a real richman
MY grandfather is not a real poorman
MY grandfather is a richman of wit and will

MY grandfather is not a man of many talents
MY grandfather is not a man of a great family
MY grandfather is a man who learned the right ways of life

MY grandfather is not a large man in size

MY grandfather is not a large man in strength

MY grandfather is a man with the largest of hearts

MY grandfather is a man of many different ways

MY grandfather is a man of many different things

MY grandfather is a man who has taken time to show me right from wrong

MY grandfather is a man who has shown me the right ways of LIFE

MY GRANDFATHER IS A VERY GREAT MAN

Derrick Coley

Poem 2--"My Family" by Willie Massey describes his feelings for his family, especially the female members. Willie, an eleventh-grader whose main interest is his involvement in ROTC, does include more details in his description. This is his second version.

My Family

It is not always easy living with
four women.
You have all the work to do around
the house.
Washing both cars,
Cutting the lawn,
And other things;
but you get along with them all the same
because they're your sisters.

Sometimes you fight and yell at
each other
over little things. Things we should
not be yelling about;
but you love them still the same
and they love you.

It's hard.
It's fun.
And you may even hate it;
but they're family all the same.

Willie Massey

Poem 3 "Granny" by Donnie Campbell is the only poem to indicate the ethnicity of the student. Donnie, a twelth-grader, has taken several phrases directly from his interview.

GRANNY

Granny, you sure have came a long-long way,
to get where you are today.
From chopping cotton, picking corn and
working in white folk's homes,
I know you have some aching bones.

Granny, it must be hard to live that kind
of way, when you have to struggle day by day.
It must be hard to be so poor that your
whole family can't take no more.

Granny, you surely have lived some hardship times,
I'm so glad they weren't mine.
But now as your life grows older, you see,
these days are gone and will never again be.

FOR MY GRANDMOTHER

Donnie Campbell

The second assignment came during the sixth week of the nine-week course. The purpose for the trip to the local senior citizens' center was to provide an opportunity for interviewing to those students who had not been able for some reason to interview an older member of his family. Those students who had already conducted their family interview were able to take this opportunity to gather personal data relating to the community project on which they were working. This visit to the senior citizens' center was the high point of the course for many of the students, according to their responses on the course evaluation. Seventeen of the 23 students were able to go--flu, suspension, an approaching drama festival, a "strict" grammar teacher, and a schedule split between the high school and the career development center accounted

for those students unable to attend. The visit began rather hesitantly on the part of both students and the senior citizens, but let Lisa Jones, a tenth grader, tell you about it. She may have problems with apostophes, but don't we all occasionally!

A Visit to the Senior Citizen's Center

I entered the new building across from City Hall slowly expecting to see a lot of sad faces. I went first to a large sitting room which I soon learned is sometimes a courting parlor. Next, I walked through a room filled with crafts, passed offices, and into a large room where pool was being played by men who knew their business. This visit was really surprising me a lot. The man directing our high school group called for everyone to move to the front of a large room so that we could be introduced to the group of older people. I could feel my knees shaking. I was scared to death to interview one of these people.

My eyes scanned the room. They stopped on three elderly women. I decided to walk over and talk to one. Her name was Mrs. Herron. I was immediately at ease with her.

She told me of how her younger days were filled. There was no school in her life. Everyday there was work, work, and more work. She remembers how she had to feed the pigs and how much she dreaded it. Milking the cow was her sister's job, but she often got stuck with it.

There was no bathroom or electricity in her home. It was filled with kerosene lamps for light. No stove or other of our modern facilities was a part of her childhood.

She lived and worked in Charlotte for some time. She enjoyed the big city a lot and Rock Hill seems small to her now.

She loves coming to the center; and though she won't admit it, her friends tell me that she has a boyfriend.

She doesn't recall dating much, but she did get married. She remembers how the long strolls were necessary to get from one place to another. However, there was a carriage for long trips.

When asked where she spent time with her date, she replies, "Church." Her father was very religious.

I had an interesting visit with Mrs. Herron. She could tell me how a lot of things I read about in books really happen

and give me more details. She made history come to life! When President Roosevelt died, everybody really did mourn and the great eclipse caused their hens to go to roost.

For a pick up in your day, I recommend a visit with Mrs. Nannie Herron.

Lisa Jones

The collection of writings which resulted from this visit is an indication of what students of all ability levels can do when they are involved and interested in their subject. The "topic" is the most fascinating of all subjects--people--and since these people represent the major ethnic groups of the community, the students' writing itself becomes multiethnic. (The third project group, the Catawba Indians, is not represented because the Center serves only city residents and the reservation land is outside the city limits. However, since the Catawbas seem to have a legal claim to the entire city of Rock Hill as well as most of York County, this situation may soon be changed.)

In looking at the interviews in this collection, the reader will note the variety of student writing styles, an indication of their abilities and talents. The interviews with Janie Weaver and Eva Smith are presented just as they were transcribed by the student interviewers--comma splices and all. These students did not choose to rewrite their materials as did most of the other students. The interview with Beatrice Gayten was a joint endeavor by Willie Massey and Kennieth Durham. So was the written version; Willie dictated and Kenny wrote it down. Jody Hager, who interviewed Benjamine Phipps, recalls that Ben kept saying--"Are you getting it down, son!" Ben also kept trying to tell risque jokes. However, these details he did not include in his article. On the other hand, Pam Currence, in her article on Doshie White does make

reference to Doshie's re[illegible] to the interview:

"One of the first t[illegible] things she said was 'Don't put me down as saying 'dis and [illegible] that, you just better not!'"

Not all of the stud[illegible] who visited the Center wrote about their experience. They [illegible] did do a lot of talking about the visit when they returned [illegible] class, and some of it was included in the community project[illegible], an important part of the course.

The success story o[illegible] of the trip, unfortunately, is not reflected in the collection. It [illegible] concerns one student whose interest up to this point in the course had been nihi[illegible]. Only the day before the visit, he had returned to class after [illegible] a three-day suspension for cutting school. At the Center as I visi[illegible]ted among the various groups, I noticed that Buster was sitting [illegible] at a table listening intently to what was being said by the other [illegible]. On the paper in front of him were a few notes, mostly dates [illegible] and local events. One was 1916--Catawba River flood. I asked h[illegible] about it and finally got him involved with talking to one of [illegible] the men at his table. I left them talking somewhat haltingly abou[illegible] the flood. On the bus ride back to school, Buster was still talkin[illegible] about the flood. In class that afternoon, he asked permission to [illegible] go to the library to see what he could find about the flood, perhap[illegible] an old newspaper clipping. He returned bitterly disapponted th[illegible] the school library only had yesterday's and today's papers. He [illegible] said he guessed he would have to go to the public library for inf[illegible]rmation. I hoped, but didn't expect the interest to last. To m[illegible] delight, the next day Buster had a xeroxed copy of part of the fr[illegible] page of the local paper printed on July 16, 1916, describing th[illegible] flooding of the Catawba River. Buster announced that he had h[illegible] to look through half a year's papers.

and on microfilm, to find the information.

Later I brought to class a book put out by Southern Railroad about the flood and its damage to effected areas. A writer did write about half a page on the flood--including tables showing loss in property and cost of rebuilding the railroad bridges; history kept the paper to make some revisions; and I never saw it again. However, A writer's interest and resulting effort--even if most of it was copied out of the library book--was my reward for the effort it took to arrange the field trip.

Not every school can have a course in Community Study nor would every student choose to take one; more importantly not every student possesses enough self-discipline and independence to profit by such a short-termed course as this one. Those nine weeks passed all too quickly. However, a short unit on "Roots of the Community" could be developed around a visit to the local senior citizens center and used as part of the curriculum.

The students' benefits from a visit such as the one described here are immeasurable. The articles they write are the tangible results. Their interest in the people and the experiences they share together will continue to benefit both students and elder citizens. The past, the present, and the future all come together. The channels of communication are open. And isn't that what "motivation" is really about.

To quote one of the students: "If you ever feel tired or depressed (and I might add--about your classes), just visit with (the local senior citizens). You can't help cheering up." (Enclosed is a copy of the booklet referred to in the paper).

CEE/1977
Knoxville, Tenn.

A Visit to the Senior Citizen's Center

I entered the new building across from City Hall slowly expecting to see a lot of sad faces. I went first to a large sitting room which I soon learned is sometimes a courting parlor. Next, I walked through a room filled with crafts, passed offices, and into a large room where pool was being played by men who knew their business. This visit was really surprising me a lot. The man directing our high school group called for everyone to move to the front of a large room so that we could be introduced to the group of older people. I could feel my knees shaking. I was scared to death to interview one of these people.

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

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She doesn't recall dating much, but she did get married. She remembers how the long strolls were necessary to get from one place to another. However, there was a carriage for long trips.

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Lisa Jones

A Visit With Mr. Millard Mackness

Mr. Millard Mackness, who lives at 600 Nine St. is very spry for a man of his age. Born in 1871, he is the years old. Mr. Mackness is very religious; he used to read the Bible as much as possible. Now he has some one read it to him for his eyes are not as good as they used to be.

The state of South Carolina took his driver's license away when he was 100. However, he has a special license so he can drive his Model A to Commencement. That is the only time that he can drive the car. The car is in very good shape too.

About Mr. MacMoore:

When he was a child, he lived and worked at the old Roddey place. His grandmother brought him there when he was only a baby and there he lived, worked, and played.

When he turned 21, he started to travel. He saw many states as he recalls: "I went to Mississippi and made a pretty good living and then I went to Georgia and worked there for awhile." He also went to Washington where he was a butcher and then on to New York. He stayed there a couple of years, but the South Carolina spirit was too strong. He came back, found a wife, and started his own farm.

Back then men were getting paid 40 and 50¢ a day and for hard work. There was a livery stable in Rock Hill and Mr. MacMoore would go out to the western part of South Carolina and bring a young mule in and sell it for $50.00 to 60.00 dollars.

Once, he remembers he killed a horse trying to break it. He had very little education and what education he got he got it from old man Roddey. Mr. Roddey was a good friend; he was like a second father. Before he was old enough to work he and the Roddey children would play games like horseshoes, or play ball or throw rocks. He liked to hunt and still does. Just give him a gun and a good dog and he is as happy as can be.

Mr. MacMoore can remember when Rock Hill had just 3 stores. And there was not a paved street in town. He can remembers when there were no cars; everyone had a horse and buggy. Then the cars came. He had 3 cars, a Wooden Wheel, a Model T, and the Model A that he has now.

He likes living in the country better than the city because it is so quiet He goes to Mr. Haven Church. He had 3 wives, 4 children, some 60 grandchildren, and 100 great grand children. Through his family, Mr. MacMoore's principles will keep living even after his death.

Danny Baker

Write Up About Mrs. Louise Crocket

Mrs. Louise Crocket was born on April 15, 1898. She attended West Chester School in Pennsylvania and came to Winthrop College to finish her schooling. She had a pony named "mini" on which she rode to school everyday. When she attended Winthrop, the other girls nicknamed her "Jap" because of her long black hair that she would put into a pony tail.

Her father owned a six-horse farm and had twelve cows. They raised cotton and other farm and produce materials. The cotton was taken to the Cotton Mill on White Street near the Rock Hill Printing and Finishing Co. come harvest time. At this time, according to Mrs. Crocket, Cherry Road was only a dirt road and went only to where Highway 21 bridge is now. It was also one of the most popular lover's lane in Rock Hill.

Old Finnly Hospital was the first hospital in York County, located at the corner of N. Confederate Street one block from Confederate Park. It was one

of the biggest attraction in the Northern part of South Carolina and everyone had to come and see its modern conveniences. But people were afraid to go to the hospital, and they depended on home remedies to cure them. Mrs. Crocket recalls that the Celenese plant was another big hit in Rock Hill and surrounding areas because it brought new jobs to the area. The same happened when the Anderson Horse and Buggy Company changed in the early part of the 1920's to Anderson Motor Company. However, it went out of business in about 1925 and sold out to Rock Hill Printing and Finsihing Co. in 1929.

Mrs. Crocket also remembers when the first train stopped at the train station on what is now Dave Lyle Blvd. Her father took her to see it some through and the next day he brought her to take a ride on it to Fort Mill. The cost was 5¢ for children and 10¢ for adults.

Mrs. Crocket was the next to the youngest of eight children, two girls and six boys. All the boys were older than she, and to this day she says that they acted just like the children today. According to Mrs. Crocket, Rock Hill may have changed a lot over the past seventy years or so, but not much has changed between brothers and sisters.

Bill Shue

Interviewee: Janie Weaver
Interviewers: Carol Neal and William Lieb

I came here in 1920 when I was 18 years old. There wasn't a lot of entertainment then. When we dated we'd have a good time, we'd go to the shows and to the fair.

There was only two kids in the family, me and my brother.

The young people of today have changed, some of it I like and some I don't like.

Religion plays a large part in my life, I've gone to church since I was ten years old. If I have something bothering me or hurting me, I can get more comfort from reading my Bible and praying than by people talking to me.

I didn't like being married too much, but after I did it I stuck with it. After the children were gone I enjoyed my marriage more. I was married at nineteen.

For Christmas, I sometimes got a doll and something to go with it, and one year I got a little piano, and a bag of fruit and candy.

Pastimes and hobbies

I do hand work like crocheting. I make scarves, afghans, and other things like that. I also like to do ceramics.

Interviewee: Eva Smith
Interviewers: Carol Neal and William Lieb

E: The first car I ever rode in belonged to Dr. Stevens. We would walk miles to ride the street cars around town. We thought it was really something to ride

the street cars. I didn't get much money on weekends, but I walk a mile so I could see a movie every Saturday. I used to be a regular tomboy. My uncle had a lot of barns and all, and we would set up an acting pile and act out things we had seen at the carnival. The boys would take old tow bagging and make hugh tents for us to act in. We used to have an acting pole in my grandfather's sary house and we'd act, you never saw such acting in your life as we'd do. We lived right inside the city limits, we had a marvelous time. I enjoyed my childhood very much. We played all kinds of games that kids today wouldn't think were anything One of our friends had a big fireplace, we'd meet there, draw a big circle around it and tell each other ghost stories. Afterwards we'd be so scared, that someone in the crowd would have to walk us home. At night, we'd meet under the street lights and play since there were no cars to bother us.

I've always gone to church. I love my church. I'm a baptist and go to college Park Baptist Church.

When I went out on my own I didn't have alot of time to learn about life. I was married at fifteen and had to learn to be a woman after I was married. I was taught to go to church and live the right kind of life. Life has always been a pleasure for me, I like my life, I've had a good time. The advice I can give young people today is "let your conscience by your guide."

Christmas was one of the best days of all. I usually got a doll, my mother would pick out the prettiest dolls for me, and a bag of fruit and candy.

My children earned their money. They brought in wood, helped with all the chores and took care of the animals.

I don't think there is a lot of diference between people today, there used to be. But I think now people all about the same everywhere. I think people are real nice, I love people.

Pastimes and hobbies

I have a lot of Indian relics, you know like arrows, pottery, tomahawks and things. I had a piece of a pipe. I don't know what tribe of Indians they came from, but I'm real proud of them. I showed one of the arrows to Chief Blue, it had a real tip on it, he said it meant there were going to be a bloody war. I don't know if he was just telling me that or not.

I have a coin collection too. There are about 55 or more perfect coins in my collection, some date back about 55 years ago. I gave my son about 200 coins I had.

I collect anything I can get my hands on, like bottles and buttons. I also like to paint, I like games, any kind of games I can get in I'm in. I like to grow plants. I have about 25 or 30 plants. I like to grow vegetable gardens, I don't think there's anything better than fresh vegetables. I love to bake, I've got one of the best cakes you've ever tasted.

Eva Adkins

Mrs. Eva Adkins is a very borterous, happy senior citizen. Her latest accomplishment is being President of the York County Council on the aging. She seems to be quite content in her older years.

Although she seems quite fond of her younger days, she is very much alive in the world today.

Her mother was called the neighborhood nurse and anything she couldn't cure was "powerful serious". Her mother had a home remedy for almost everything. For a kidney disease her mother would quote a verse out of the Bible. She said that one must quote the verse to the opposite sex, if the cure is supposed to work.

Mrs. Adkins took care of a family of 14, at the age of 7. She washed clothes, cooked breakfast and supper, took care of some of her mother's sick patients, and still had time to play.

Mrs. Eva Adkins is a very active woman. She attends local parties, weddings, etc. If you ever feel tired or depressed, just visit with Eva Adkins. You can't help cheering up.

Sere Roberson.

Beatrice Gayton

Mrs. Beatrice Gayten was a nurse who had no schooling or training. She just started when she used to sit with the old sick ladies around where she lived. She also helped people with cuts and things. One of her remedies is for a headache. She would put green leaves on the person's head. She also advises wearing a hat on it. She said she helped deliver lots of babies in this community. She is a very nice lady to talk with. You can learn a lot just by talking with her; she really cares about people.

Kenneth Durham
Willie Massey

Walter Roseboro: A Man of Our Past and Present
Interviewed by Donnie Campbell

Mr. Walter Roseboro, Sr. a man of 74, has some very interesting "roots."

Walter Roseboro has been a very hard working person since his childhood. He grew up on a farm in the backwoods of the Porter Road area. His parents were also workers. Mr. Roseboro stated that he received the talent for hard working from his parents.

Whenever he could, Walter went to a small one-room school.

Walter was married in 1926. During his 53 years of marriage, he has provided for his wife and four kids. His early work was hard to come by in those days. He recalls being payed 20¢ a day for a long day's work.

Walter also remembers when land in Porter Road was sold for about 50¢ an acre. He also recalls the first car to be driven in this area. John T. Roddey an important businessman in Rock Hill at that time, was the proud owner. Mr. Roseboro says he also recalls when everyone drove a horse and buggy.

When Mr. Roseboro was asked if he had his life to live over what things would he change? He stated, "Not a darn thing at all."

Benjamin Phipps

Benjamin Phipps is a walking medical book. Talking with him is really an experience. He told me how to cure headaches and fevers and how to treat cuts. He knows a many remedy for almost everything. He also recalls that when he was little, there weren't any ambulances and if someone had to go to the hospital, they would load him up in a old back wagon. He said you would pay money for house calls by the doctors. If you didn't have any money, you would trade crops and goods for a house call. He is proud that he has never been in the hospital a day in his life. His advice for a long and healthy life is to go to bed at 9 o'clock at night and get up at 5 o'clock in the morning. He says that young people today just drink beer and stay out all night; and that's no way to live long.

Jody Hager
March 22, 1977

Interview with Mrs. Cora Stewart

Mrs. Cora Stewart lives on 332 N. Confederate Street. She is 84 years old and loves her life. She goes to Senior Citizens almost everyday.

When Mrs. Stewart was a child, her family lived on a farm. They had food from the animals and also milk. Her father worked in the fields for a living. Later they lived in the city where he worked as a carpenter. The change from country life to city life was very strange. They loved the country and will never forget it.

Cora dated a few times. Her parents didn't like her out at night, so the boys picked her up in the day. They either went to church or for a ride in the buggy and carriage.

In Cora's time, they didn't have doctors offices. The doctors usually came to the house. The only time Cora can remember being real sick, was when she was 15 and she had pneumonia. However, she often had trouble with her eyes.

Cora's family lived in the age of the outhouse. If you were lucky, your outhouse had three toilets. There was no sort of electricity. She remembered first seeing Rock Hill lit up in lights. She said it was one of the prettiest things she had ever seen.

Tracey Durkee

An Interview with Doshie White

It is hard to include all the things that I learned from Mrs. Doshie White. I learned that back in the "good old days" you got up at five o'clock to feed the hogs, milk the cow, and churn before you walked five miles to school. It sure was fun, working's fun. You only went to school from January through March so that you could help at home the rest of the year. You wore high top shoes that were buttoned or pinned in the back, and a bonnet. You didn't have "store bought" patterns and some of the chores you did were picking peas and cotton and hulling nuts. And that is only a start.

Doshie White is one of the most colorful people I have met in a long time, and also one of the happiest. She's eighty-four years old, and one of the first things she said was "Don't put me down as saying 'dis and dat', you just better not!" Her sewing is unique, she doesn't like pants, and I got the most unusual cornbread recipe I've ever heard of. (Who'd have thought of using real corn and sour cream--but why not?) For all of you cornbread and milk fans, "back then" when you mixed together and ate it with a spoon it was called chunkup. "We didn't eat that very much," says Doshie.

I was disillusioned, however. When she was giving me her recipe, I could just picture her great-grandmother baking it in an old slave cabin during the Civil War. "The white lady I used to work for's sister gave it to me a long time ago." I was told.

I admired some crocheting she had with her, and she told me that she also makes bonnets. She was in Ft. Jackson six years ago when someone had one and she let Doshie examine it. Doshie uses no pattern and in '75 she made five or six hundred of them. "I made sixty for one person." I don't doubt that she was telling the truth when she said she loves to work!

Mrs. White has nine brothers and sisters. Her father died when she was young and her husband is dead now. She is the mother of six, and three of her children are still living. Anyone who comes incontact with her is in for a treat--but I'd hate to be the one who made her mad. This lady has spirit!

Pam Currence
March 9, 1977